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FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2166
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2319
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0089
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHMFIUU/CDR JPAC HICKAM AFB HI

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STATE FOR G
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STATE FOR OES/IHA
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR OFDA
AID/W FOR DCHA/OFDA ROBERT THAYER
AID/W FOR ANE
BANGKOK FOR ACTING OFDA PRINCIPAL REGIONAL ADVISOR WILLIAM BERGER
AND ACTING OFDA REGIONAL ADVISOR THOMAS ROGERS
KATHMANDU FOR OFDA REGIONAL ADVISOR SUE MCINTYRE AND ACTING REGIONAL
ADVISOR MARIZA ROGERS
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR OSD/ISA/AP (LSTERN)
BANGKOK FOR CDC (MALONEY AND ZIMMERMAN)
BANGKOK FOR USAID (JMACARTHUR, BOWLES, AND ROGERS)
PACOM FOR SURGEON'S OFFICE (COL. MACHESKY)
PACOM FOR J52 (LACY)
PACOM FOR PACAF/SGZ (Cinco, Palmer)
JPAC FOR MUNIPALLI

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [SENV](#) [EWWT](#) [EAID](#) [CASC](#) [ASEC](#) [LA](#)
SUBJECT: DISASTER DECLARATION FOR FLOODING IN LAOS

Refs: A) Vientiane 456
B) Vientiane 451
C) Vientiane 450
D) Vientiane 447
E) 07 State 142452

1. This is an action request. In view of the mounting reports of damage caused by flooding in Vientiane and various provinces in Laos and in response to the August 18, 2008, appeal of the Government of Laos to the international community for assistance, the Charge d'Affaires has determined that a disaster exists, that the disaster is of such a magnitude that the Lao government is not able to respond adequately, and that the Lao government desires assistance. The Embassy requests \$50,000 in Ambassador's Authority Funds as discussed with USAID/OFDA Regional Advisor. The Ambassador, who is out of the country, concurs with this request.

2. As reported in reftels, intense rainfall in northern Laos has led to severe flooding in many areas of the country. The Foreign Ministry's appeal for donor assistance described ongoing events as "one of the worst floods ever occurred in the Lao PDR" (MFA diplomatic note No. 1035/AE.OI.1 dated August 18, 2008, but delivered August 19, 2008) and appealed to the international community "for immediate assistance and cooperation in flood mitigation and emergency response efforts."

3. The Mekong River is the principal waterway of Laos and forms parts of its lengthy border with Thailand. Flooding has affected or is expected to affect thousands of people, damage homes and infrastructure, and inundate significant quantities of agricultural

land destroying crops. Major concerns for affected families are water quality, waterborne diseases, sanitation, the absence of shelter, adequate food, and the loss of personal property. People and areas along the river are very likely to continue to be impacted through the end of the rainy season expected in October.

¶4. As of August 18, the National Disaster Management Office at the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare estimated that 10 provinces, 41 districts, 565 villages, 27,838 families and 151,000 people were affected by the flooding. Six people were killed in Vientiane province. Preliminary estimates from the provinces indicate that there was about \$12 million worth of damage to crops, infrastructure, and property in Luang Prabang province and \$10 million worth of damage in Bolikhamxay province. No estimates were yet available for other heavily affected areas, including Vientiane municipality and Vientiane province.

¶5. Thus, the Government of Laos has declared that a disaster exists, and the Charge d'Affaires affirms that it is in the interest of the U.S. government to provide assistance. In accordance with USAID disaster guidance (Ref E) and the U. S. Mission Disaster Relief Plan, the Charge d'Affaires has determined that a contribution of \$50,000 should be made to the Lao Red Cross to help meet the immediate emergency needs of flood affected populations. This assistance would fund the purchase of items including, but not limited to, emergency shelter materials, water, and water purification tablets and equipment. Additional assistance may be necessary. Post appreciates advice and support from USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA).

MCGEEHAN